

Message Text

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17

ACTION ORM-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 IO-13 ISO-00 DHA-02 EUR-12 VO-03 SCA-01

CIAE-00 INSE-00 DODE-00 SY-05 DEAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 /054 W

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R 130845Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3239

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 25512

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY BANGKOK DATED SEPT
13 RPTD URSTA:

QUOTE

SONGKHLA 213

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF,VN,TH

SUBJECT: INDOCHINA BOAT CASES

1. DURING PAST WEEK THERE HAVE BEEN SOME MILDLY ENCOURAGING DEVELOP-
MENTS CONCERNING BOAT REFUGEES HERE. REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRENCH
EMBASSY, ACCOMPANIED BY UNHCR REP MRS. CHRISTINE SMETZ, SPENT SEVERAL
DAYS HERE AND FRENCH HAVE TENTATIVELY AGREED TO TAKE ANOTHER TWELVE
FAMILIES, ABOUT FIFTY PEOPLE. ON SATURDAY SEPT. 11, FORTYONE (41)
REFUGEES DEPARTED SONGKHLA WITH MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ESCORT FOR
BANGKOK ULTIMATELY BOUND FOR HOLLAND. THIS INCREASED INTERNATIONAL
EFFORT HAS HAD SOME IMPACT ON LOCAL OFFICIALS WHO (NOT ALTOGETHER
ACCURATELY) SAW DIRECT LINK BETWEEN ARRIVAL OF UNHCR REPS AND
DEPARTURE OF REFUGEES. WHEN NEW BOAT OF NINE VIETNAMESE ARRIVED
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WHILE UNHCR WAS IN THE CAMP, WE DID NOT HAVE USUAL GRUMBLING FROM

LOCAL OFFICIALS ABOUT GETTING RID OF THEM. BELIEVE MORE REGULAR AND FORCEFUL UNHCR PRESENCE IN SONGKHLA WOULD BE HELPFUL BOTH IN ENABLING THEM TO TAKE CREDIT FOR DEPARTURES OF REFUGEES AND IN USING CREDIT TO PLAY A ROLE IN PREVENTING DEPORTATIONS SUCH AS CASE OF THIRTY FIVE CAMBODIANS EXPELLED LAST WEEK.

2. IN ADDITION, DARREL HAN OF UNHCR (FORMERLY RESIDENT IN HANOI) SPENT THREE DAYS IN SONGKHLA DOING STUDY OF BOAT REFUGEES HERE. HE PLANS TO GO ON TO MALAYSIA, SINGAPORE, AND HONG KONG TO COMPLETE STUDY FOR HIGH COMMISSIONER. HE WILL RETURN TO GENEVA IN OCTOBER TO TAKE UP DUTIES WITH UNHCR ASIA DIVISION. HAN VERY MUCH AWARE OF THE NEED FOR MORE SYSTEMATIC POLICY TOWARD BOAT CASES RATHER THAN GOING ON IN CURRENT AD HOC MANNER. AMONG OTHER THINGS, HE IS INTERESTED IN POSSIBILITY OF UNHCR APPROACH TO ASEAN IN ARRANGING FOR GUARANTEES OF TEMPORARY REFUGEE IN COUNTRIES OF FIRST ASYLUM.

3. FINALLY, WALL STREET JOURNAL ASIA CORRESPONDENT, BARRY KRAMER, HAS BEEN IN SONGKHLA FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND SAYS HE PLANS TO DO STORY ON REFUGEES. HE WILL ALSO BE TRAVELING TO MALAYSIA, HONG KONG AND SINGAPORE.

4. FROM SONGKHLA PERSPECTIVE, INCREASED ACTIVITY BY THIRD COUNTRIES, UNHCR, AND PRESS IS ENCOURAGING SIGN THAT MORE ATTENTION IS BEING FOCUSED ON PLIGHT OF BOAT REFUGEES.
SIGNED HAMILTON. UNQUOTE.
BURKE

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NNN

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